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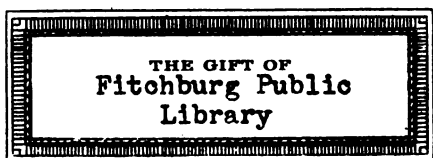
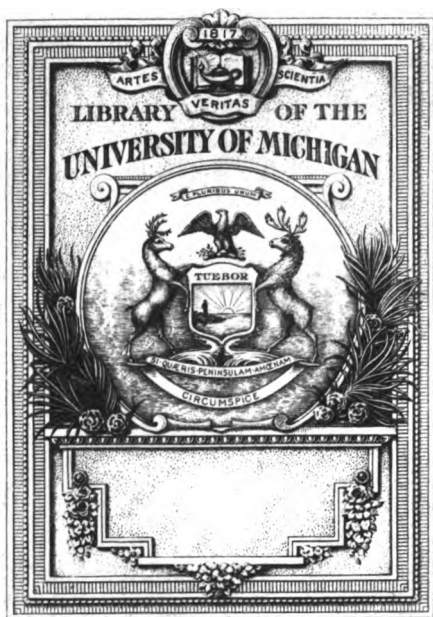
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Dedication of the Wallace library and art building.

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DEDICATORY EXERCISES

WALLACE LIBRARY

—and—

ART BUILDING

FITCHBURG, MASS.

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*Wallace library and art building,
Fitchburg, Mass.*

DEDICATION

— of the —

WALLACE LIBRARY

— and —

ART BUILDING

July 4, 1885.



FITCHBURG, MASS.

Printed by
BLANCHARD & BROWN,
Fitchburg.

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Dedicatory Exercises.

The WALLACE LIBRARY AND ART BUILDING was dedicated July 1, 1885. The exercises were held in the main library room, Mayor Davis presiding. There were present the members of the City Council, Board of Trustees of the Public Library, other municipal bodies, invited guests from abroad, and many citizens of Fitchburg.

Rev. S. L. Blake, D. D., invoked the divine blessing, after which Hon. Rodney Wallace made the formal presentation to the city council, Mayor Davis standing at his left and the members of both branches of the city council rising from their seats directly in front of him.

PRESENTATION BY MR. WALLACE.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen of the City Council:

In March, 1884, I made to your honorable board a proposition as follows:

To convey to the city by deed this lot of land, and with the advice and approval of the Trustees of the Public Library to expend within two years, not less than forty thousand dollars in erecting a building on said lot to be under the management of the trustees for the time being, and used for a Free Public Library, Reading Rooms and

an Art Gallery, and for no other purpose. The City Government in accepting this shall assume and bear the current expenses of the same.

All this was accepted with the kindest expressions.

Plans were prepared and received the approval of the Trustees, and June 10, work was commenced upon the foundations of this building. The best materials of all kinds were selected, the best mechanics employed, and more faithful service could not have been rendered had each man employed been the sole owner of the building.

Our best thoughts have been given to have the building adapted to the purposes for which it is intended, and I have found pleasure in giving it my personal attention. No pains or expense has been spared to make the building first class in all respects, and it is nearly or quite fire-proof.

Cost of Building,	\$70,000
Cost of Furniture,	2,000
Cost of Land,	12,500
Total,	\$84,500

In the hands of the City Government and under the management of the trustees, I have perfect confidence that the building will be well cared for and as a home for the Library, Works of Art and Free Reading Rooms, it will be of increasing value to our people. With pleasure and the most earnest wish that to many of our people these rooms may prove to be a place of rest and profit, and help make the journey of life more pleasant and useful, I now present to you the deed of this property and keys of the building.

Mayor Davis, as the official representative of the city, made the following response, and received the deed and keys :

RESPONSE OF MAYOR DAVIS.

Mr. Wallace: The city council, in behalf of the citizens of Fitchburg, accepts your munificent gift, and return their sincere and heartfelt thanks. You have more than fulfilled your promises to the council in March, 1884. Through your great generosity, this community will attain higher degrees of moral and mental worth. May your life be spared many years to witness the noble results you desire.

The dedicatory address was then delivered by Ex-Governor John D. Long :

ADDRESS OF HON. JOHN D. LONG.

In your city, itself one of the marvels of New England civilization, has now by the generosity of one of its citizens been erected, and to-day we dedicate, a building which embodies in its proportions the grace and suitability of consummate architecture, and in its purpose the loftier inspiration of the genius of learning, art and letters. Fondly as we recall the modest and homely roofs our fathers raised, let us not shut our eyes to the homely significance, also, even of such a temple as this. As we look at its stately front, the classic style of its architecture, its spacious galleries, its heavy stone buttresses and steps, its arches sprung over granite columns and carved capitals, its ample chambers to be richer in their store of treasure

than the halls of Montezuma, its illuminated windows, and its perfection of convenient detail, let us remember that it stands teaching us, and those who shall come after us, not only in itself a lesson of beauty, but in itself also a lesson of industrial education, of laborious artisanship, of mechanical skill, of the trained eye and hand and the disciplined taste. It speaks not alone of the wealth of which it is the generous gift, but also of the humblest and homeliest labor and toil which laid its stones, and carved its beams, and wrought its frescos, and which, by the exquisite poetic justice of our civilization as expressed in Mr. Wallace's benefaction, are now themselves to share equally in all its opportunities and blessings. Palaces have been built out of sweat and bone which later only begged and starved at their gates. Matchless temples of antique art might as well have perched upon the clouds whose grace they rivaled—erected not alone to unknown gods, but to no humanity, and echoing only with the mad oracles of the idle winds. But this is the plant of hands that will gather better than golden fruit from the branches of the very tree their own toil has helped bring to bearing. I doubt not the generous heart of him who conceived and gave this boon, counts it also as his most grateful satisfaction that it represents the output of his own labor as well as the abundance of his store—the early thrift of his hard-working hand as well as the later enterprise of his busy brain.

But the value of this edifice is not most in its architectural proportions and its cunning workmanship of frame and finish. It is in the magnificent use, the generous and

ennobling service to which it is consecrated. Literally a treasure-house of knowledge, an inexhaustible mine of education—the monopoly of no man or body of men—it is thrown wide open for generations to come to the free common resort and possession of the people. A Roman emperor, wasting the substance of the state in selfish wars or to feed his own luxurious depravity, tickled his starving subjects with now and then the pageant of a procession or drama, the blood of the gladiatorial arena, or the distribution of corn, as modern travellers throw coins to Venetian beggars. To-day an American citizen, one in the ranks of a free and equal community, architect of his own deserved and liberal fortune, loyal to the needs and ambition of his common citizenship, paying tribute to those foundations of the American polity which are the general intelligence and virtue of the people, wresting nothing from others but giving of his own, opens in the heart of your city, at the corner of your streets, over against the memorial shaft that tells the story of your patriotism, an unfailing well-spring of public education. He smites the hard rock of this intense American industrial and material system and lo! the waters of life, rich with nutrition for the whole intellectual and moral nature, gush forth. Confided to the library authorities of Fitchburg without other restriction than their own good judgment of what the needs of the city shall require, provision is made and given for a public library and art building that shall ensure the whole range of published study and inquiry, and forever open to every citizen free reading rooms and the treasures of science, art and literature. If you would

measure its value, you would not reckon the land or brick or wood, nor even the hundred thousand dollars, more or less, that have gone into its construction. You would measure it, as I am sure the giver himself does, by looking along the expanding vista of the time to come. You would here see some future Bunyan, of rapt imagination, saved by its illumination of inquiry and truth from those terrors and hideous fancies of religious frenzy which drove the young tinker of Bedford almost to the madness of despair, though I fear you would lose the vivid allegory of another Pilgrim's Progress. You would picture here the eager face of some later Abraham Lincoln burnt with the sunshine of the farm, or Henry Wilson hastening from the shoemaker's bench, some weaver from his loom, some young mechanic from his forge, the men and women of your industries—all here enjoying a society of refinement and culture, a communion with the master spirits of all time, an education in all the humanities. The myths of classic time will here be the homeliest of facts. The goddess of all knowledge will spring full-equipped from the cleft of a mightier than pagan god-head—the open volume of a book. The winged Pegasus that bears its rider to the stars will be the leaves—more precious than the Sibyl's—the leaves on these clustering shelves from which no idle wind will flutter them. Measure the value of this public library! Suppose for one moment that its contents were blotted out; that the world of books were consumed; that the record of History, Science, Fiction—the vehicles of fact and event, of discovery and truth, of imagination and poetry—were a lost art! Why, we live

less in the present than in the past ; less in ourselves than in the atmosphere and society which history and literature have created. What man in this region of the earth is so open to you in his heart and thoughts and dreams as David, or Emerson, or Thackeray ! Of what man here do you know so much as of Washington or Bonaparte ! In whose poetic tendernesses or aspirations do you find half the sympathy you find in Longfellow and Whittier ! What drama of domestic or public life is half so familiar as that of Walter Scott or Shakespeare ! Which of your neighbors can hold you with the illuminated talk-torrent of Macaulay ! Is there nothing, too, to be said in praise of an agency which thus sweeps our vision and our interests out of the small and inbreeding confines of local friction and gossip into these world-wide and time-wide ranges of creative power ! Here in his single hand the citizen grasps the universe. Here he listens to the debates of Congress. Here he watches the movements of armies on Afghan or Egyptian fields. Here he studies the diplomatic contests of Europe, and looks over their shoulders into the hands of negotiating ambassadors. Here he is member of the Senates of the world. Here he traces the comet in the sky, or cuts Isthmian canals, or explores the icy terrors of the pole, or in the exquisite realms of the imagination sings with the poet and inquires with the philosopher. Here solitude becomes society. The soul is supreme master of the realm, and man recognizes that he is a god. It is more than a school—more than education. It is absolute possession. The scholar is king ; and every

citizen is the scholar. His soul inherits the earth. No devil tempts him, yet his are all the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them.

This is not an occasion for elaborate essay. It is, rather, a gladsome time when the hymn of the poet were better than the sermon of the preacher. It is, rather, a midsummer holiday when we meet to exchange pleasant congratulations upon an event which best speaks for itself, and to dedicate a building which is most eloquent in its own suggestions. And yet there are some things of which it is so significant, that I linger upon them.

While this building, which we dedicate with such especial interest, is unique in its purpose, and the occasion of its dedication is somewhat apart from our ordinary routine, it is yet—to the honor of our American civilization be it said—only in the line and easy evolution of our New England system. It is as much a flower of the Pilgrim and Puritan seed, as much a part of the providential scheme of the Mayflower and of John Winthrop's landing, as much fused with the flavor of Harry Vane, as much a result of that vote of 1647, which declared that "learning should not be buried in the graves of our forefathers," as is Harvard College, or our common school system, or as if every stone under its roof, every book upon its shelves, every picture on its walls had been in the mind's eye of the founders of Massachusetts. Still more does it partake of the elements of our later consummations—the marvellous industrial growth of these communities of which Fitchburg is such a striking example. In its very ampli-

tude it yet embodies the idea of that homely saving economy, that intelligent thrift, that careful provision for future needs which characterize New England. It embodies the idea of those great agencies and massings of skilled and citizenised labor which at once employ a multitude of hands and at the same time stimulate as many activities of invention and brain, and so combine manual toil and intellectual genius in that splendid union of which our national institutions are at once the cause and the result. Thence comes the steady expansion of general prosperity; the increasing thriving of the body of the people; the greater independence and comfortable self-support of families; their homes in separate dwellings of their own, into each of which flows a growing tide of refinement, culture and amusement; the enlargement of public education and the advancing standard of the schools; the saturation of the press and the consequent connection of local life with cosmopolitan interests; along with these the accumulation by individuals here and there of large fortunes, not wrenched out of others' earnings but constituting in the process of their very accumulation the cause of others' earnings; and then, at last, the public spirit in some such individual, which, hardly more by his own generous impulse than by the general sentiment of which he is almost the involuntary expression, appropriates a part of his fortune back to the public use and service. Can there be a finer tribute to labor than that thus, by its own inherent law of action, operating under our institutions of political freedom, it ministers to its own nobler needs even in the very act of

its own exercise, whether executing the designs of the nicest skill and most scientific mechanisms or faithfully hewing wood and drawing water,—its own hand providing for the education of its head and the refinement of its heart! Behold a marvel, more wondrous than any tale of magical conjuration or oriental myth! For not in the closet of the student, not in the shade of the cloister, not in the vistas of the poet, not on the campus of a college, but straight out of the busiest, most intense, hardest-headed and hardest-handed material concentration of industrial, manufacturing, money-making, labor-employing forces and enterprise springs this fair flower of the gentlest humanities, this grace of art, this fountain of letters, this frozen song of architecture! What is this but poetry and religion—the tribute of the creature to God—the obeisance of matter to mind, of toil to rest, of the hard practical forces to their master, the spirit of thought and vision—the recognition of that spiritual, that mental and moral sovereignty which is the divine equality of all the children of God and to which all lower life with its inequalities of circumstance, its dross of riches and its grime of toil, is the shell of the chambered nautilus!

This building is thus typical of the true communism. Here is the most precious wealth, the best treasures, as far above all material mint and anise and cumin as the clouds above the earth—and all is for all alike. Ah! that is the sweet assurance which letters, books, art, literature, the whole range of intellectual life give to the world. The vicissitudes of fortune, the fluctuations of business,

the rise and fall of stocks and prices, the successions of good times and hard times, the inequalities of material lot which are inevitable, nay, are the very soil and stimulus of individual and social bettering—all these cannot invade this realm, and he who invests his happiness in this security will never suffer bankruptcy. The refinement and riches of study and letters, open alike to all, is one of the lessons of this dedication, summoning the world to its communism of goods. The wealth of Cræsus could not gather out of the past, out of the resources of intellectual treasure more than this enclosure will hold, and yet all that this enclosure will hold will be, not the monopoly of Cræsus, not his exclusive of you and me, but our common possession; and the poorest child will here come and here command statesmen, poets, orators, warriors, all the greatness of human career to his side, to minister to his pleasure, companionship and instruction. Under this vault will echo no song of the shirt, but the poet's song of the woods, of enriched solitude, of the mind's paradise. And here, whatever his garb or trade or circumstance, the citizen-student will learn that there is nothing so great as his own soul; and that the master spirits of all time, who have inspired all the volumes of all the libraries, exist not so much in themselves as in their own ideals, or rather in the ideals of those, who have with varying exaggeration and mirage interpreted their deeds or words, reproducing for us poet, prophet, leader and inspirer, not out of those limits and facts of certain years of our Lord which are shifting guess-work, but out of those subtle and worshipful

conceptions and mountings of the human mind which are the eternal and only truth. He will learn that to him these great spirits are of most interest as even thus they reflect his own highest ideals and help him realize them. Nothing to him the royal robes or fragrant palaces of Solomon, but everything to him David's agony of pain or tumult of aspiration, because they are the pain and aspiration of his own heart.

This building is also a tribute to American citizenship. It embodies the very genius of American institutions. If there be anything marked in the personal history of our American names, it is the independence of their success and their career from all the ordinary props of what is supposed to be advantageous individual fortune. It is upon the unmonopolized opportunities of American life that the citizen only need rely, laying hold of those nearest at his hand to lift himself to the upper air. Here some of them will be in especial readiness at his command. Ours is, or is more and more becoming, a government of public opinion, and of public opinion cumulated out of independent individual research and reading and digestion. The accidental man in place is very much the involuntary agent of the public sentiment he represents,—if a right man, the expression and agent of the best leadings of that sentiment; if a wrong man, then of its hesitations and obliquities. More and more, in fact as well as in phrase, the citizen is the sovereign—a sovereign whose influence and power rest not on his wealth or station but on his character and his absorption of the best philosophy of

society and government. What an education for that influence and power is not this library—a corner-stone indeed of citizenship!

I have refrained from special reference to the generous man, whose benefaction we dedicate to-day. He is my personal friend. I have been his associate in the service of the commonwealth. His counsel I have valued and his experienced wisdom I have tested. The very warmth of my esteem is a reason why I should not belittle his generosity in this liberal act of his by measuring and limiting it by words of mine. The best tribute to him is in his own work and in the cordial responsiveness with which you, his fellow-citizens, who nearly all his life have known him through and through, have here gathered to honor him in dedicating it. I know, too, that he asks no other recognition from you or from me than the public acceptance of the unrestricted gift he now places in your hands, and its devotion by you for all future time to the public service. I do not forget, however, that by this act he has emphasized the whole example of his life and so suggested not the least significant lesson of this hour. For what better fruition can he have, what better inspiration we, than to recall the honest industry and brave purpose of a career which in early youth overcomes every resistance of adverse circumstances; which conquers success; which lays out and walks a broad way of large, comprehensive and beneficent business enterprise; which puts a generous public spirit into every step and so makes its own success identical with the common prosperity; which commands

universal respect and confidence and the honors and duties of public trust; and which wins fortune to expend it again, in this and many another instance, in helpful return to the sources from which it came!

Citizens of Fitchburg, I congratulate you upon the completion and dedication of this splendid building. It will be an unfailing spring of public instruction. It will teach the harmony and mutual dependence of our common interests. It will be a lesson of true citizenship. It is the tribute of industrial activities to the genius of letters and art and to the sovereignty of the soul. It is an inspiration to labor and to the spirit of progress. It is also the memorial of a good man and an exemplary life. In no shaded seclusion, but here—here in the heart of your city and of its all-enriching industries of which he has been so large and vital a part—stands the monument of Rodney Wallace.

May he long live to enjoy its usefulness. And long may its blessings shed their influence on you and yours, as the sunshine and showers refresh and fructify the responsive soil. Ah! how gratefully will succeeding generations gaze, as they pass or enter it, upon the Wallace Library and Art Building.

The following ode, written by Mrs. Caroline A. Mason of Fitchburg, was then read by Ray Greene Huling, Principal of the Fitchburg High School.

ODE BY MRS. CAROLINE A. MASON.

"Of making many books there is no end :"
 So sang the Preacher. Now, kind heaven forefend,
 Calamity so dire!—And yet, alas,
 'Tis even so; the worst has come to pass,—
 And well nigh every scribbler in the land
 Steps glibly to the front with book in hand;
 And craving favor for his callow brood
 Miscalled ideas, "hopes he'll not intrude!"
 Indeed, sir, but you do! for who has time
 Or patience for your half digested rhyme
 Or trashy novel?—nay, who has the "*dime*?"
 Yet to be honest, some there are who make
 This small investment and this large mistake;
 Preferring dross to treasure, choosing bane
 Instead of blessing, loss instead of gain.
 For there are books and *books*—who need be told?—
 And some are tinsel, some are solid gold.
 Ah, what a treasury of wisdom lies
 In a good book! and who would not be wise?
 What founts of sweetness and of strength well up
 From its deep heart! who would not quaff the cup?
 The bees must know where honey-dews abound;
 Oh for a human instinct as profound!
 The birds must fathom where the south-land lies;
 Oh for an intuition half as wise!
 For what are intuitions, but the soul's
 Blind reachings after its supremest goals?—
 Divining helps whereby it may essay
 A stronger sweep along its upward way;

Seeking in glad, yet reverential mood,
 All gentle friendships with the Wise and Good
 Of every nation, age :—and look around !—
 Shall not such helps, such friendships *here* be found ?

Oh sages, poets, who shall fill this place
 With lavish store of wisdom, sweetness, grace !
 Here we may pay our homage and grow wise
 And glad beneath your helpful ministries.
 Here we may offer the allegiance meet
 To blind old Homer, sit at Milton's feet ;
 And learn of both, as fails the outward sight,
 To trim anew the spirit's inner light :
 May sing with Chaucer, walk in Faerie land
 With sweet-lipped Spencer ; taking Dante's hand,
 Explore the dark abysses where, denied
 All hope of exit, hapless souls abide ;
 May summon Shakespeare—in himself a host ;—
 King Lear and sweet Ophelia, Hamlet's ghost,
 Sad Desdemona, Egypt's peerless queen,
 Coming and going on the shifting scene ;
 Commune with Cooper, walk afield with Burns,
 And listen to him as he sings by turns
 Of luckless Tam O'Shanter and his mare,
 Sweet Highland Mary and The Brigs of Ayr ;
 Or coming down to later times, rehearse
 With Tennyson his grand, immortal verse ;
 Talk with dogmatic, scholarly Carlyle,
 Uncouth, but grimly honest all the while ;
 Abide with our own Emerson, or go
 A-wooing after Nature with Thoreau ;—
 Though, for that matter, all the poets woo
 The gentle nymph,—and our immortal Few,
 Our Whittier, and Longfellow and Holmes,
 Bryant and Lowell,—whosoever roams
 With either, sees fair Nature with new eyes,
 And life with larger possibilities.

But time would fail us passing in survey
 The sages and the poets of to-day ;
 How name the shining ones whose thoughts sublime
 Have sounded through the corridors of Time,—
 Philosophers and Scientists and Seers—
 Names handed down to us through all the years,
 And garnered here? Alas, ye Good and Great!
 Could we your wisdom but assimilate,
 Nay, make one tithe of it our very own,
 Each were a monarch, with the world for throne!
 At best, we can but gather here and there,
 And some a larger, some a smaller share;
 Content if we but summon to the quest,—
 Each, all, our truest instinct and our best.

Who makes two grass blades flourish where, before,
 Grew only one, is worthy; how much more
 Shall he be counted so who sets in train
 A growing revenue of *mental gain*?
 Behold our modest grass blade has become
 A thousand! nay, but who shall tell the sum,
 Or say what crops of richness shall upspring,
 Lavish and lush, for future harvesting?
 And he is of us who has sown the seed
 Of all this plenty: give him royal meed
 Of thanks and blessing! May his joys increase,
 His days be gladness and his nights be peace!
 May every lovely growth his hands have sown
 In others' paths, spring up within his own!
 And heaven, at last, re-echo earth's award,
 "Well done, well done, thou servant of the Lord!"—
 For souls like his, shall, of a surety, find
 He serves his God the best who serves his kind.

But not alone to garner up rich store
 Of Thought and Poesy and Classic Lore,
 These walls arise: here *Art* shall have her seat,
 Attracting thither our untravelled feet.
 We need not cross the seas nor idly roam
 The Continent, for Beauty found at home;

And though at every turn we may not trace
 The wonders of the Vatican, nor face
 The grand old Masters in their Titan might,—
 Turning, at length, half weary from the sight,—
 Enough of strength and loveliness in Art
 To charm the eye and satisfy the heart,
 Shall paint these walls with visions of delight,
 Familiar scenes, and old-world pictures, dight
 With old-world gleam and glory : here and there,
 Haply, our own home-touches, deft and rare,
 Shall yield their fair results and make us own
 That Art is not the growth of any zone,
 But finds her Italy in every clime
 And knows her own in every land and time.

Beauty and Use : wherever these unite
 To serve the race, 'tis by divinest right :
 And so this noble pile of brick and stone
 Shall work for us a mission all its own ;
 Shall be to us both prophecy and sign
 Of Light and Progress, by a law divine ;—
 A noble means unto a noble end ;—
 An upward way, whereby we may ascend,
 Like angels on the ladder Jacob saw,
 Into the larger life, the higher law
 Of Goodness, Beauty, Truth,—making us know
 That life is worthy, only as we grow
 Into the Good, the Beautiful, the True,
 From height to height, as God's dear angels do.



REMARKS OF HON. HENRY B. PEIRCE.

Hon. Henry B. Peirce, Secretary of State, responded for the commonwealth. 'Mr. Peirce congratulated the city on having such a citizen as Mr. Wallace.

The example of his unostentatious, unstinted, and far-reaching generosity develops in others a like desire and adds continually to the list of "doers of the word." Such men are a blessing to the commonwealth, to the country, and to the world, and much of the success which has distinguished our State government and its institutions is due to the influence, the support and the counsel which they have contributed.

Judge William S. Shurtleff of Springfield was the next speaker.

ADDRESS OF HON. WILLIAM S. SHURTLEFF.

I am very glad to be here, not only because the physical surroundings are among the most delightful that New England—and that is saying, that the earth—can furnish, for New England is the present Paradise of the world; not only because I am privileged to enjoy the hospitality of one of the most hospitable of the peoples of New England,—and that, again, is saying, one of the most hospitable of the peoples of the world; for there are no warmer welcomes than those that New Englanders have for their guests; not only because I am privileged to meet one of the most honored, and, better still, to hear one of

the most eloquent of the orators of New England and of the time, whom to meet and hear upon an occasion and a theme so congenial to the man, were worth a weary journey through a weary land to a wearying people instead of one by pleasant paths to a pleasant land and a pleasant people, such as mine has been ; but also, and principally, because I am garnering here a memory that will be precious to me all the remainder of my days : the recollection of having been present and having had even a little part at the beginning of a great good. A great good not only to this community, but to all its neighbors, to the whole commonwealth, to all the world ; for the "plant" made here to-day is to be profitable instantly, constantly, and everlastingly to everybody, to every one ; for intelligence is diffusive like the sunlight, pervading like electricity. Once engendered it serves all. The brightened mind of your neighbor brightens yours, and yours another's, and that others another's, and so on through the whole round of possible recipients of intellectual influence.

"Cast but a pebble on the ocean wave,—
In perfect circles, widening evermore,—
The little ripple that it makes shall lave
In tiny wave the far opposing shore."

So it is with communicated knowledge. Intelligence is like one of the forces of nature. It cannot cease to effect. As electricity pervades and connects all material things, a mysterious, yet undiscovered, kindred something connects the minds of men and the knowledge of one becomes instantly the knowledge of all, to a greater or less degree in each, as each in a greater or less degree is fitted

to be a receptacle. And it follows, that he who, in any way, whether by personal instruction, or by the establishment of a church, a school, or a library, has added to the knowledge of a single individual has increased the intellectual assets of all. "Whoever," it has been said, "causes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before is a benefactor to the world." Whoever causes a single ray of intelligence to shine where before was the gloom of ignorance is a greater benefactor to mankind, as much greater as the spiritual is greater than the material good.

All men naturally seek knowledge. Knowledge is best attained by thought and experiment *after* the study of experiences recorded in *books*.

The best books are inaccessible to the majority of the masses in every community, because that majority is always restricted in means. What greater benefactor, then, can there be, than he who opens to this class a reservoir of knowledge from which their circumstances have hitherto excluded them? Who then can be a greater benefactor to Fitchburg than the founder of the Wallace Library? This is the time and place to bestow upon him the title which he must permit us to confer, and which he must hereafter bear as the highest one that his public service has earned for him—that of "*Benefactor of the people!*"

I would that I might here say all that I have in my heart to say to him, in commendation, gratitude and gratulation; but circumstances constrain me to restricted speech; but, he must feel and know, without anything being said to him, that all the people are grateful; that his wise

generosity is thoroughly appreciated; that his name will hereafter, for all time, be inseparably connected with the intellectual and moral progress of this city; and we may assure him that, so long as he shall live, his reward will be sure and constant in beholding the rich results of his beneficence; and we may confidently predict that his children and his children's children, on to the last generation of his descendants, will be proud of their ancestor and of his good work of to-day. And we, who are guests, may congratulate the people of Fitchburg that they have had, and now have among them one of those rare citizens, who wise to win wealth, are also wise and generous to expend it. Let us hope that he may long continue with them. And I may, personally, and as a citizen of Massachusetts, thank him for what I hold to be one of the greatest of our benefactions—*The benefaction of books.*

Books are the powers behind the thrones of the world. They are our rulers, our monitors, our guides, our companions and our friends. They have a wider reach than the pulpit, the rostrum or the stump. They instruct better than the preceptors, warn and allure better than the priests, convince and control better than the orators. Without them Thought is a guideless vagrant, and Culture, if it come at all, a matter of chance association of the more ignorant with the less *un-informed*. With them every avenue is open to well-directed thought—travel, and progress and culture are possible in every direction.

This subject is too broad for me to enter upon here; but as I have thought about this occasion, the reflection which has most occupied my mind, after the consideration

of the great good that Mr. Wallace has wrought for us all in the gift he has made of this building, has been how great to the world is the *benefaction of good books*, and I have, in my heart, thanked Cadmus for letters, Guttenburg and Faust for type, Caxton for the printing press, the unknown of Sarmacand for paper, and Nature for ink, and all the authors who have written, all the compositors who have "set up," all the pressmen who have imprinted, all the proof-readers who have *attempted* to correct, and all the binders who have bound the books which have given to me a satisfaction the most unalloyed of any of my life except those that have come from affection given and returned and the consciousness of worthy work worthily done; books that have given me instruction in my ignorance, comfort in my sorrows, amusement in my ennui, rest in my weariness, assistance always in every need,—good always. And it is to such friends and helpers, Mr. Mayor, that you now invite all your people.

Here, year after year, will come the searchers for knowledge, and they will be supplied and will go hence to spread the intelligence here acquired, far and wide. Here the lovers of song, and the born singers, will come to school, and, with lyres and lutes attuned by the masters, will go forth to sing new and perhaps sweeter songs to the world, sorely needing such. Here the votaries of science will come for research, and deducing, from the solved problems of the past new corollaries, make new departures, toward still more wonderful unexplored domains. Here

the theologian will come to trace the paths of spiritual science and philosophy, and from the disputations of the careful and conscientious controversialists of the past learn to eliminate errors and introduce truths into the creeds. Here, from the accumulated lore of all the ages with which these shelves will be filled will the preachers, poets, orators and scientists of the future Fitchburg be equipped to go forth to teach truth to Error,—if the trustees who are to carry on this begun benefaction shall be as judicious as the benefactor has been generous.

For, while *good* books are the best of benefactors, bad books are the worst of malefactors. It is not to be doubted that the wisdom that has planned, and so far carried into operation, this great enterprise will still guide, in the future, to such a selection of volumes to fill the waiting shelves as shall exclude the pirates in prose and the villains in verse who steal the divine livery of literature to serve their respective Satans in, and the silly who spoil so much precious paper, from companionship with the good, the wise and the witty who are here to serve as the instructors of the community in religion, science, history, geography, art, poetry and that romance, *and no other*, which, born of pure and noble aspiration, cultures the heart in its affections, and the soul in its spirituality.

The market is full and, it is feared, will always be full of literary trash; but none need find its way within the walls of the Wallace Library. It is time, and not too late, for the establishing of a severer censorship over the book aspirants for admission at the doors of our public libraries.

It has been too much the custom of librarians and trustees to consider that because their libraries are public ones the depraved as well as the refined taste of the people must be catered for ; that every book published and popular must be had if possible. This is mischievous. No book should be shelved in a public library except it be of pronounced value of culture, study, reference or healthful recreation. The supplying of ephemeral, light literature should be left to the circulating library, the railway station book-stand, and the train newsboy. No building is large enough to contain all the good books, and there is not shelf-room enough in any to afford space for a bad one. It is to be noted, with satisfaction, that reform in this regard has begun. May it be continued at the beginning of the Wallace Library. Much depends upon this beginning. Your shelves are to be filled. Fill them with the "benefactor books" and police them against the malefactors. There will be clamor from the frivolous for their favorite pabulum ; but serve them as prudent guardians serve their wards. To paraphrase the familiar hymn, "Not what they *want*, but what they *need* supply," and you, Gentlemen Trustees, shall share with Rodney Wallace the honor of giving to your city—
the benefaction of books!

Hon. George E. Towne of Boston, a loyal son of Fitchburg, was received with much enthusiasm and spoke as follows :

ADDRESS OF HON. GEORGE E. TOWNE.

May it please your Honor and Gentlemen of the Jury: This is a peculiar case. The defendant is charged with having deliberately and with malice pre-pense, conceived the project of presenting to the city of Fitchburg a Library and Art building, and having further, with energy, skill, and fidelity, carried his purpose into effect. There is no denial of the allegation, no attempt to plead insanity, or even to take advantage of the technicalities of the law. The defendant un-blushingly avows the act, acknowledges that he meant to do it, and in point of fact that he actually has done it. In short there is confession in place of defense, and not only this, he appears to be quite capable of occasionally repeating the operation in other directions. Under these circumstances, would it not have been safe and proper to submit the case to the jury, without further argument especially as the senior counsel has so thoroughly covered the ground for the prosecution, that we juniors have left, nothing but gleanings, and mighty poor gleanings at that. Still, the decree has gone forth that the gleaning must take place, and as one of the juniors, I yield my judgment and—unsheath my sickle, and I find myself at the outset, debarred by circumstances from availing of a common resource of men when in a desperate strait. I cannot conveniently

"take to the woods," but I can take refuge in the past, and fortunately I feel retrospectively inclined. Partly I suppose by force of contact, as my eyes rest upon the beauties, and I recognize the fitness, of this exquisite temple of education and art,—but perhaps more from the force of the associations, which wherever I stand in the presence of my old friends and townsmen, come trooping in upon me from every quarter, and cluster thickly about all my lines of thought. I find my mental telescope involuntarily adjusting its focus to scan the horizon which lies dim and misty, beyond a gulf of nearly a half century. It is quite possible that in groping among the far-away phantoms of the past, I may get quite out of your sight and hearing. If I do, please do not trouble yourselves to hunt me up; for I shall have thus effectively served my own purpose, and at the same time have rendered you the best service which chance has left in my power.

Two stained pine book cases first claim my attention, standing in the front room of a low, one-story, wooden building, at the corner of Main street and Cottage square, on the site now occupied, I believe, by the Stiles building. It had large projecting windows, so pretentious and out of all architectural harmony with the rest of the structure, that I fear I ought rather to have spoken of it as a pair of windows with a one-story building projecting in the rear. This was the stationery store and book bindery of Mr. Phineas A. Crocker; and here I pause for a moment, to pay a passing tribute of regard and affection to this simple-hearted, unpretending, white-souled gentleman, whom

doubtless some of those who hear me may recollect. And not only as a tribute, but also as a measure of reparation do I speak of him, for I was one of a half-dozen somewhat unruly boys, who made of his shop a rendezvous and headquarters, where we projected mild forms of mischief, to an extent well calculated to drive to distraction any business proprietor with well defined ideas of proper business management coupled with conscientious scruples against killing small boys.

It seems strange to me now, but out of his great, loving heart, our friend patiently endured—nay, actually seemed to enjoy—our pranks. I only hope that we did not hasten his progress to the grave, and on the whole, I think not. He seemed ever to be satisfied and content, though by our behavior we outraged every maxim which should govern the conduct of good little boys, and was apparently never more happy than when submitting, as he always did with unfailing cheerfulness, to the bondage of his merciless tyrants. Peace to thy ashes thou guileless, loving, loyal soul! The world would be the better, were there more like thee.

The two book cases of which I have spoken, contained the two or three hundred volumes comprising the library of the Fitchburg Athenæum, which at that time constituted almost the entire public dependence of Fitchburg for the mental pabulum of its citizens, or, as the ancient Egyptians used to put it, for their "medicine for the mind." Possibly medicine may be a better term than food. Ignorance is certainly in some sort a disease, for which books are perhaps the best remedy.

Mr. Crocker was the librarian of the Fitchburg Athenæum, and the care bestowed by him upon the few volumes, the satisfaction with which he aided applicants in their selections, and the pride he felt in having been selected as worthy to bear such tremendous responsibility, were something marvellous to see.

Of course it should be borne in mind, having in view a correct estimate of the true proportion of things, that Fitchburg, at the time of which I speak, had a population of only about 1500 souls. The soothing shriek of the locomotive whistle, and the rumble of car wheels upon the iron track, had not yet awakened the echoes of the valley. In place of the almost hourly trains now connecting you with the New England metropolis, the stage coach of Mr. Day, one of the most popular drivers that ever handled the reins of a coach and four, completed a round trip three times a week, by dashing up with a flourish and crack of his whip in front of the old tavern, then occupying the site of the present Fitchburg Hotel. The old tavern was afterwards transferred to another field of usefulness, near where the court house now stands, and as may be recollected, became the occasion of considerable annoyance, discomfort, and I am afraid, profanity.

The telegraph and telephone were alike unknown, and the resource of swearing at the central office was not yet at hand, as a vent for the vexation of troubled souls.

Most of the thousand luxuries which have so rapidly moved to the front of our modern life, and there

claimed place as necessities, were undreamed of. The streets were unlighted, horses and oxen struggled with the mud of unpaved highways, pedestrians picked their way gingerly through the mire of what should have been, but certainly were not—sidewalks, and alternately hopped from stone to stone, and balanced upon narrow bits of board, which but served to postpone the inevitable final catastrophe.

The teeth of shivering sinners chattered, as they sat on Sundays in unwarmed meeting-houses, musing upon the possible comforts, and wondering if after all, something might not be said in favor of—that sheol against and from which the minister was laboring to warn and rescue them.

The morals and temper of the community, just fairly recovered from the famous meeting-house controversy of a former generation, which in its day had threatened almost the stability of republican institutions, had not yet been tried in the fiery furnace of the depot contest, which a few years later, was to rock the town to its foundations, and which for a quarter of a century after, maintained a sharply defined line of demarcation between "Up-town" and "Old City."

On the east side of Main street between the dwelling houses of the late Dr. Boutelle and C. Marshall, Esq., there was, I think, but a single house, and an old blacksmith shop completed the record, to where the American House now stands. Prichard, and the cross streets leading thereto, were not, and the whole area

between Main street and the Fox Hill range, was pasture land, upon a part of which, literally "my father fed his flocks," which, again literally, my father's son drove back and forth, night and morning.

Just west of where the court house now stands, stood a clump of forest trees which subsequently gave to Grove street its name; while Punch brook, not having yet assumed the duties of a scavenger, danced and rippled merrily through the town, stopping at Hatters' pond to do a little serious work, and laughing all the rest of its way to the Stone-mill pond, at the thought of it.

The change upon West, Prospect, and Mechanic streets has not been, perhaps, so great, but from the Unitarian church to Grove street, hardly a structure of that day, of any kind, is left standing upon either side. South Fitchburg was a nebulous haze, while West Fitchburg, now in its busy and prosperous industries almost rivalling the centre, was then hardly more than a scythe factory.

It was for Fitchburg the day of small things, and yet, though it is of course a far cry from the stationery store of Mr. Crocker, to the exquisite structure this day dedicated, it is quite possible, that considering the comparative scarcity of books and the imperfectly developed general taste for reading, the Fitchburg Athenæum Library may have been to the necessities of its constituency, relatively not so far inferior to those of to-day, as might at first seem apparent.

In those two wooden cases there was hidden the

protoplasmic germ, from which has been gradually evolved the Fitchburg town library. It was the first stage of its existence. The second was reached, when the town in 1859 voted its first annual appropriation, and established it solidly upon its present municipal basis, recognizing by the act the truth that educationists have been so slow to learn; that the human mind is not only a receptacle, but a tool and weapon as well, the sharpening, and teaching the use of which, is for the school days, a work more important even than "cramming"; that real education begins, when the preparatory work of the schools ends,—that, in short, the library fitly supplements the school house.

To-day we pass to the third era of its life. Having outgrown the limits of its second domicile—put in short, as the librarian was at his wits end, in the efforts to dispose of an ever-increasing store, another is provided by the munificence of a princely benefactor.

As to the inestimable value of this gift and the pleasant duty now incumbent upon us of testifying to our appreciation of it, there can be no question. You have sir, (turning to Mr. Wallace,) "planned wisely and builded well," and many hundred moons will wax and wane, and many generations come and go, ere any complaint of unfitness or inadequacy can be raised against the Wallace building. You have builded well; and long after your work and ours here are ended, generations, to come, as they repair hither for their "medicine for the mind," will hold your name in grateful recollection. Montaigne tells us, that when the soldiers of Alexander

brought to him a cabinet of priceless value, found among the treasures of the conquered Darius, he caused it to be set apart as a fitting repository for his much honored Homer.

In the cabinet this day dedicated, you give us not the spoils of a captured camp or conquered city, but rather the results of conquered difficulties successfully surmounted in the course of a long and honorable business career; and like the great Macedonian warrior you seem to have felt that a library building should be

“A casket worthy of the gem it holds.”

Certainly not Alexander in the cabinet of Darius had a more fitting receptacle for his cherished guide and idol than you have given us, as a repository for the productions of our modern Homers.

In this practical age, men seek upon the shelves in their libraries for a fulcrum for the Archimedian lever with which to move the world, and find in books a substitute for the supernatural agencies, once so potent over the minds of men. Aye, sir, books are the real magicians of an enlightened age, for they bring the dead to life and give us to hear again the utterances, and read again the thoughts of lips and brains long since returned to dust.

They are the true immortals, aye, more! they are gods for they confer immortality. Tell me, as in the quiet of your library you mingle with the vast multitude which people the world of fiction, communing at will with Hector and Helen, Æneas, Anchises, Hamlet and Othello,

Rob Roy and Effie Deans, Sam Weller and Mrs. Gamp, tell me if immortality is not conferred and guaranteed by the divinities which you find upon these shelves—their home.

They are the true orators for they know how to be silent and when to speak. However eloquent may be the orators, whom the world calls great, they are as nothing in comparison and competition with the voiceless occupants of these shelves which during endless years will guard and perpetuate the great thoughts of mighty masters and to generations yet unborn will give them utterance when sought. Surely I but voice the unanimous sentiment of the present, and but anticipate the verdict of the future, when as I stand within the fitting temple you have provided for the enshrinement of such treasures, I look about me and proclaim it well and worthily done.

Prof. Henry M. Tyler of Smith College, Northampton, was the last speaker.

ADDRESS OF PROF. HENRY M. TYLER.

And now, my old friends and neighbors, what shall I do? What can I say? I wish that I could have visited Mr. Peirce. Then I might have given you the advantage of that speech which he did not prepare. But now since all that I had in mind to suggest has been so much better presented, I can only assume the

privilege which still belongs to me as one of you, and talk over familiarly with you what has been said and done.

I was struck with the prominence which has been given in the memorable address of the orator to the thoughts of the American ideal and the American idea. Go where we will in the world we cannot get away from the fascination of that thought, that there is a purpose which guides our way, that even though it be half unconsciously, there is a plan which we spontaneously fulfil. And so from the very beginnings of our history in all of our onward movement the beckoning of that ideal has ever strongly controlled us. When our fathers crossed the water they came here to raise not corn but men. What was requisite for manhood, was the object of their especial desire. And the problem never leaves us. Whither are we tending and how shall we direct our course in the development of ourselves? Thus we are forever questioning, and as we question we bring all resources to our common work. The American mind becomes intensely inquisitive in its desire to explain itself and its surroundings. I am reminded of a prominent theologian of our land who visited Berlin, and having but a single day to spare, felt that he must improve his time, and so hired a guide to take him to the place which he wished to see. With true Yankee energy he explored the city and at the same time plied his attendant with all manner of questions from morning until night. Exhausted at length by the zeal for knowledge which our worthy countryman

displayed the guide asked him if he were an American, and on receiving an affirmative answer threw up his hands with the exclamation, "Then may God forgive Christopher Columbus for ever discovering America." We are inquisitive as a people. We are forever busy searching into the mysteries of our mission and our work. The foundation of our nation, the basis of our citizenship is a principle—an ideal. Our ideals sustain us and guide us as a people. In our activity of mind there is our strength.

Representative Americans have thus been always men of intense energy of mind. The life which starts with very humble surroundings comes often to a splendid future. One of the speakers has alluded to the simplicity and poverty with which the Fitchburg Public Library was started. But in times of simplicity and poverty what men have been reared! Life has grand possibilities in a land where there are such grand opportunities for growth as in ours. And so the good work to which the building is consecrated, while beautiful in its present scope, is immeasurably great in its hope and promise. There could be no enterprise more appropriate to our institutions and aspirations. Because it so belongs to our civilization and is so requisite for our development, because it is sustained and aided by the best sentiment of the people, because it meets their deepest wants, is an intrinsic part of the ideal which controls them, it must have a future of surpassing value. Remember then that this is not the consummation, but the beginning of what you have to do. The library is a sacred trust, committed to your charge.

It is for you to see that it maintains the high character which ought to belong to it. It is for you to see that it is ever made helpful to the best growth of your citizens. It is for you to watch jealously that the best books are placed upon those shelves. Responsibility always grows larger as our opportunities increase. You take to yourselves, in accepting the splendid gift to-day, new cares and new duties. The library must be worthy of the high work which it is called upon to perform.

It seems peculiarly appropriate that this building dedicated to such purposes should have been erected by Mr. Wallace. He has been a man of the people, trained by contact with popular feeling, kept always acquainted with the beaten footpaths of human life. He grew up among the hills of New Hampshire, receiving no favors, but learning with others to take the blows of fortune as they come. His training was that of the common school, especially of that best of all common schools, the experience of a boy who has his own way to make in life. By his own industry and faithfulness and earnestness he has greatly prospered but prosperity has never alienated him from the people, nor his fellow-men from him. And so to-day as one among you, who sympathizes with all that is popular in the best sense of the term, he brings this gift to his neighbors and friends. It may well be dedicated to the people's need.

And now as your old fellow-citizen and neighbor, allow me to say that we mutually congratulate each other. We are delighted over our good fortune, though I cannot say that we are surprised. No one can tell us

of the donor's generosity ; we knew it already years ago. So valued is he as a friend and associate that if even now we were called upon to make the hard choice we should say without a moment's hesitation "We will give up the building but let us keep the man." Yet do not be frightened, sir, we have no thought of relinquishing either. But always this Library and Art Building will be the more highly appreciated and valued, not for its own peculiar utility but because it is a memorial of one whom all love to remember.

I was thinking as I sat here of the rugged New England hillsides and the bounties which have been gleaned from them for all our land. Their substance has been given to enrich the valleys just as their streams have filled the rivers which give prosperity to our thriving towns. And better than all, their rugged fields have nursed and disciplined the youth whose sterling character has proven the stay and strength of the land. There is an old Persian hymn which ever comes to my mind as I think of our New England landscape. I picture to myself the pious mountaineer of the east greeting the rising sun with his hymn of devotion, and giving praise for the beauty and grandeur which surround him, and I feel that we might well join with him in his hymn of thanksgiving, saying, "For the strength of the hills we bless thee, our God, our fathers' God." How much of appreciation and love is due from us to these New England hills! With how much sincerity can we join in the prayer, long may they continue to send us their limpid waters and their better men.

The exercises were interspersed with music by the Russell Orchestra. Various selections were rendered in a pleasing manner.

The committee of arrangements for the day consisted of Messrs. Thornton K. Ware, Henry A. Willis, Joseph G. Edgerly, Philip J. Garrigan and Herbert I. Wallace on the part of the Trustees of the Library, and Mayor Davis, George H. Spencer, President of the Common Council, Alderman John Burney, Councilmen Carmi M. Parker and John H. Daniels on the part of the City Council.

Cards of invitation had been sent to many friends from abroad, some of whom were present, and others sent letters of regret. After the exercises, many of those present availed themselves of the opportunity of inspecting the building.

In the afternoon a large number of the residents of the city and persons from abroad paid their respects to Mr. Wallace at his home on Prospect street.

The Fitchburg Band gave a concert in the afternoon on the upper and on the lower common.

The day of the dedication of the noble structure must be regarded as a memorable one in the history of Fitchburg.

The building was kept open for the inspection of the public for several days. The unanimous opinion of those who visited it was that the enterprise was noble in its inception and that its projector well deserved the commendation of his fellow-citizens.

HISTORY

— of the —

WALLACE LIBRARY

— and —

ART BUILDING

— • —

FITCHBURG, MASS.

Historical and Descriptive.

The city council of Fitchburg met in joint convention Tuesday evening, March 25, 1884. Mayor Davis presided and announced that Judge T. K. Ware, chairman of the Trustees of the Public Library, had a communication to present.

Judge Ware said that he appeared at the request of Hon. Rodney Wallace, who, previous to his departure for the South, left with him the following communication which gave him pleasure and gratification to be able to present to the city council :

To His Honor the Mayor, and the City Council of the City of Fitchburg:

GENTLEMEN:—The subscriber has felt for a long time that a building with proper appurtenances for our Public Library here in Fitchburg was much needed, and makes the following proposition, viz :

I propose to convey by proper deed to the city of Fitchburg my lot of land situated at the corner of Main Street and Newton Place, and to expend, with the advice and approval of the Trustees of the Public Library, within the next two years, a sum not less than forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) in erecting a building on

said lot; said building to be under the care and management of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library for the time being, and to be used for a Free Public Library, Reading Rooms and Art Gallery, and for no other purpose.

And it is understood that the city government, accepting these donations for the above purposes, shall assume and bear the current expenses of said building, grounds and appurtenances, after the Library Building shall have been completed and furnished.

If the above proposition is accepted, I shall proceed to carry out the same as soon as it can conveniently be done.

RODNEY WALLACE.

Fitchburg, March 17, 1884.

Mayor Davis said: "This act on the part of our esteemed fellow-citizen calls forth the profound gratitude of all the inhabitants of our city. I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without expressing my thanks, as a citizen, for the munificent gift. May his life be long and his prosperity increasing."

The following order, introduced by Mayor Davis, was then unanimously adopted:

Ordered, That the City of Fitchburg accepts the donation of Hon. Rodney Wallace of the lot of land on the corner of Main Street and Newton Place, and the Library building to be erected by him thereon, upon the conditions

and in accordance with the terms and provisions contained in his written communication and proposal to the Mayor and City Council; and places on record its profound appreciation of the public spirit and munificence of the donor, and its recognition of the incalculable benefits which will result to his fellow-citizens and their descendants and successors for all time from this noble gift.

Alderman Joel said the surprise was so great and so agreeable, that words were not at his command to express the thanks, he, in common with all other members, felt were due Mr. Wallace for the munificent gift. He moved that a committee be appointed to prepare and forward a vote of thanks to the donor. The motion was unanimously adopted, and Mayor Davis, Alderman Joel, Councilmen Flaherty and Parkhill were appointed as the committee.

At a subsequent meeting the committee submitted the following resolutions which were placed on record and a copy sent to Mr. Wallace.

Whereas, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Fitchburg have received and accepted a proposition tendered by Hon. Rodney Wallace of this city, by the terms of which, a lot of land situated at the corner of Main Street and Newton Place is donated to the City of Fitchburg, and a sum not less than forty thousand dollars is to be expended by him, with the advice and approval of the Trustees of the Public Library, within the next two years in erecting a building on said lot,

said building to be used for a Free Public Library, Reading Rooms, and an Art Gallery ; therefore,

Resolved, That this body desires to voice and place on record the universal appreciation on the part of our citizens of the generosity and public spirit of the honored donor, of the timeliness of the gift, and not less, of the wisdom and foresight manifested in the particular mode by which the City is made the recipient of the munificent present.

Resolved, That we recognize the fact that a gift of this nature will result in incalculable benefits to the community so fortunate as to receive it, enlarging and intensifying, as it does, all the privileges of acquiring information and securing culture which a public library affords ; providing in a most accessible and useful form the means by which our young people and those whose daily toil leaves them little leisure for study, may draw to themselves the results of all past experience ; and rendering both attractive and easy to all classes of our people opportunities of turning their thoughts from the sterner features of their daily occupations to the amenities of life as presented by specimens of artistic and literary merit.

Resolved, That while sharing in the delight of our citizens in view of the valuable gift thus unexpectedly placed at their service, we congratulate them even more upon the presence among them of men whom Providence has blessed in three-fold measure—with hearts abounding in philanthropic instincts, with material resources ample for the

gratification of such impulses, and with that rarer gift than either, the judgment requisite to secure for their donations the widest and most permanent range of influence.

Resolved, That we cannot resist the inclination to felicitate our honored benefactor upon the deep and abiding joy which must be the most adequate reward for this expression of his good will toward the city—the joy arising from the knowledge that every home within our corporate limits will enter into the enjoyment of his gift, and that not a few of our youth will be allured from scenes of degrading and immoral pleasures by the presence in a most convenient location of a beautiful edifice, within which are at their disposal the graces of art and the riches of literature.

Resolved, That the distinguished giver by this gift, the most valuable ever received by this community at one time from a single citizen, has "erected a monument more enduring than bronze and loftier than the regal structure of the pyramids" in the establishment of a lasting sense of gratitude within the hearts of his appreciative fellow-citizens.

ALONZO DAVIS,
JOEL JOEL,
BERNARD H. FLAHERTY,
JOHN PARKHILL,
Committee.

Fitchburg, April 1, 1884.

ACTION OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

At a meeting of the board held April 7, 1884, the following resolution was adopted, and a committee consisting of Rev. Philip J. Garrigan, Henry A. Willis and Lewis H. Bradford, was authorized to present a copy to Mr. Wallace :

Resolved, That we have heard with great satisfaction of the proposed gift by Hon. Rodney Wallace of land and a building for the use of the Public Library, thus providing for a want long felt by the trustees, viz : facilities for making the Library fully available to the people of the city which it never could attain in its present confined quarters.

That we will fully co-operate with the generous donor in any manner desired by him in carrying out the details of his proposed undertaking, and that we desire here to place upon our records our keen appreciation of the generous spirit which has moved him to tender this munificent gift.

[From the Fitchburg Daily Sentinel, March 26, 1884.]

HON. RODNEY WALLACE'S MUNIFICENT GIFT.

A GENUINE SURPRISE.

The best surprise ever made in this city was at the common council room last evening. The secret was well kept. The call for the special meeting of the city council was issued, Tuesday morning. To all inquiries in relation to the business to be transacted, Mayor Davis returned the mysterious reply, "I am not at liberty to state."

Never before was there such a mystery attending a meeting of the city council, and never was a mystery explained more satisfactorily. Every member of the city council was silent for some time after Judge Ware had finished reading the proposition of Mr. Wallace.

The generous gift made by Hon. Rodney Wallace to the city causes general rejoicing in this community. Citizens are accustomed to expect liberal things from this large-hearted donor, but the munificence of the gift surprises every one. The warmest expressions of gratitude are heard alike from the oldest citizen and the youngest person who patronize the public library. It is agreed that Mr. Wallace's generosity could not have found a more appropriate form of expression, or one which would be so thoroughly appreciated by all classes.

The public library is one of the most valued institutions of the city and its benefits are shared alike by the wealthiest and the humblest inhabitants. Its sphere of usefulness has steadily enlarged and the wisdom of establishing the reading-room is daily demonstrated. But its location in the rear of all the city offices, though undoubtedly the best in the city hall building, is not what it should be, and the heavy city debt seemed to preclude the city from erecting a suitable home for the library.

It is agreed on all sides that the lot given by Mr. Wallace is the best possible for the purpose in the city. With Monument Square, upon which the city has expended \$75,000, directly in front, and the court house beyond, the view from the new building will be attractive, and there is no spot in the city where tasteful architecture could have a better effect. The location is central, convenient to the post-office, and several of the costliest buildings in the city are in the immediate vicinity.

It is a subject of congratulation that Mr. Wallace makes this gift during his life, rather than by bequest, and that Fitchburg is to have the benefit of his taste and judgment in the erection of the edifice. Were the building erected at public expense, he, of all others, would be selected to superintend its erection. The building will be a temple of science, literature and art, and will be a noble monument to the wise and discriminating liberality of the donor, who, unsolicited and of his own free will and pleasure, has so liberally remembered the present and future inhabitants of this city.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING.

Work was commenced upon the foundation of the building June 10, 1884, and from that time until the completion of the edifice there were no delays in any branch of the work and every part was done in the most thorough manner.

The exterior is built of Trenton pressed brick, with brown sandstone trimmings from the Kibbie quarry at Longmeadow and is in the Greek classic style of architecture. The foundation is dressed Rollstone granite and the basement is dimension ashler. The cornices, gutters and hips on the roof are of copper. The roof is covered with Brownville slate.

The building has a frontage of seventy-four feet, and a depth of sixty-five feet, with a central front projection six by twenty-five feet. The front entrance is approached by a walk of pressed brick, thirteen feet eight inches wide, and a flight of twelve dressed granite steps between ornamental buttresses of the same material as the steps. The front doors are placed in a recess eleven feet wide and six feet deep. The wall above the recess rests on a heavy double arch, supported on each side by two columns of polished red granite with carved capitals. Above the arch are three square-headed, single light windows, and the name of the building appears in raised letters—the word "Wallace" above the middle window and "Library and Art Building" just below it.

The sandstone trimmings above the two outside windows of the three are ornamented with fret work. Over these windows are three circular windows set in sandstone and at the sides of each window are round sandstone columns with carved foliage capitals. The whole is surmounted by a gable with modillion and dentil cornice, all of copper. In the frieze of this cornice the date of erection, "1884," is inscribed with scroll work each side of the inscription. The pediment is of brick.

The second floor is lighted by narrow windows arranged in groups, there being two groups of five each in front. On each side is a group of eight windows, to the right and left of which are double windows separated from the group by chimney piers. The rear is lighted by one group of four windows and three of two windows each.

The basement is lighted by square-headed mullion windows four in front, five on each side and four in the rear. The windows of the first floor which are directly over those in the basement are circular-headed, and are trimmed with heavy molded Voussoirs with two lights of plate glass.

The top of the building is surmounted by a large skylight, thirty by thirty-nine feet, with side lights beneath this part of the building.

In the window over the door of the main entrance is the city seal upon a plate of Venetian and antique glass five feet in diameter. In the lower corner of this window are panels of glass emblematic of art and literature; the glass is of two thicknesses. Outside the building the effect can be seen only when the hall is lighted. From this hall

one flight of marble stairs leads to the rooms above, another flight to the basement; at the left is a door leading to the ladies' retiring room and directly opposite are the large swinging doors leading to the library proper. The floor of the entrance hall is of Italian marble and the wainscotting of Italian, Knoxville and Tennessee marbles, relieved by rosettes of French Red; the ceiling is frescoed in oil, the design being a delicate tracing upon a gold background, and the frieze is a scroll design in gold upon a deep red background. The hall is lighted by a large brass chandelier with twelve burners.

The waiting room which is separated from the entrance hall by swinging doors, is finished in oak and frescoed in neutral tints, and around the sides, for the use of persons waiting to receive books, are placed oak seats upholstered in brown leather.

The delivery counter is directly beneath the arch which opens into the main room for books. This book room is twenty-six feet by seventy feet, and sixteen feet in height, and at either end are large fireplaces of brick, sandstone and marble. Connected with the main book room at one corner is a small room with wash bowl, etc., for the use of the librarian, and next to the librarian's room is the elevator which runs from the basement to the upper story.

On the left of the waiting room is the room for books of reference. The book cases, chairs, table, and mantel in this room are of oak and there is at one side a large fire place for wood.

On the right of the waiting room is the reading room for magazines. The ceiling of this room is panelled with

heavy carved oak cornices and beams, and the ceiling, frieze and walls are frescoed. There is also a heavy oak mantel with a large plate glass mirror over it. The room is furnished with two large tables and a reading desk and chairs, all of oak. This room contains a fireplace.

In the basement there is a public reading room in which a large number of daily and weekly newspapers will be kept on file. Here are also the boiler room, and two large rooms which are to be used for work rooms and for storage purposes.

The upper vestibule, is large and high. The style of the room is varied, being Gothic, German and Italian. The arched ceiling is frescoed in sombre hues with a frieze of subdued gold and in the cove above are paintings of natural flowers upon a dark background, while the flat surface has the same design as the hall below. Directly over the stairway is a large panel in blue with oak branches interwoven across.

This vestibule is lighted by a magnificent chandelier of eight burners made of brass, copper and oxidized silver. On the right of this room is the Trustees' room, which is beautifully frescoed, carpeted and finished in mahogany, and heated by an open fireplace. The furniture consists of a mahogany table and chairs of the same wood. Next to it is a toilet room for the use of the trustees. From the vestibule a door leads directly into the Art Gallery.

The Art Gallery is thirty-three feet by forty-four feet, and thirty-two feet in height, and is lighted entirely from above by corrugated glass panels in the ceiling, and windows of the same glass on the four sides of the monitor

roof; the wood work of the ceiling is frescoed in dark olive and bronze. The fresco painting of this room is remarkably rich and harmonious in color effect, the style being the pure German Renaissance. The dado is a dark olive relieved by a band of gilt; the walls for the pictures, a Pompeian red, surmounted by a frieze of rich design and color, representing conventional pomegranate leaves and fruit.

The general effect of the cove is a gold scroll upon a light blue background. In the cove are four large paintings, one upon each side of the room. There is one, "Arts and Sciences," directly opposite the main entrance. It represents Vulcan at his forge—Apollo as God of Music surrounded by the Muses representing painting, poetry, music, astronomy, history, etc. Above the main entrance, directly opposite "Art and Sciences" is "Apollo Musagetes," in which Apollo is represented as driving his chariot through the clouds, while he is surrounded by the Muses and pursued by the Fates. At one end of the room is a smaller painting called "Old Masters." In this picture a child is seen standing upon the edge of a staging, in an old cathedral, swinging a burning censer, out of the smoke of which arises the nude form of a woman, and over the woman an artist is bending with palette and brushes in his hand. The conception of the picture is, that the old masters received their inspiration from the church, the child with the censer representing the Catholic church.

The picture at the other end of the room, a companion painting to "Old Masters," is called "Modern Art," and represents a female artist painting from a living model, the idea being that modern artists paint directly from nature.

The designing in this room was all by the artist who painted the pictures, Mr. Scharstein of Boston, who worked about three months upon them and to whom much credit is due for the elegance and fine artistic effect secured.

Around the Art Gallery are four small rooms, each twelve feet by twenty-three feet, which will be used for various art purposes. All the wood floors in the building are of southern hard pine and all the finish with few exceptions is of oak. The doors are all made of oak and are heavy and substantial.

The work upon the building was mainly done by Fitchburg mechanics.

The following are those who had charge of the principal branches of work: Architect, Henry M. Francis; master builder, Henry G. Morse; foundation laid by Peter Blanchard; underpinning, curbing and steps, Daniel O'Connor; mason work, Wetherbee & Derby; slating, William Edwards; steam heating, piping and plumbing, Parks & Carpenter; floors, doors, glass, etc., Charles A. Priest; the finish was made and all carpenter work was done by Henry G. Morse; frescoing, Strauss Bros. of Boston; marble work, C. E. Hall & Co., Boston; copper work, E. B. Badger & Co., Boston; all trimmings and hardware furnished by I. C. Wright & Co.

HISTORY

— of the —

PUBLIC LIBRARY

— of —

FITCHBURG, MASS.

The Fitchburg Library.

The history of this library is similar to that of other institutions of like character. Its growth has been gradual. It has developed from small beginnings. The Fitchburg Philosophical Society was organized, about the year 1828, for the purpose of maintaining lectures and debates. It was before this society that Hon. Nathaniel Wood delivered a series of lectures on the history of the town, the manuscript of which is now in the public library. From these lectures most of the material was obtained that was used in the preparation of Rufus C. Torrey's History of Fitchburg, published in 1836. The society soon after its organization purchased Reed's Cyclopædia in six volumes. These books were intended to be the basis of a library, but the project was not a successful one, and in 1838 the six volumes were transferred to the Fitchburg Library Association, the successor of the Philosophical Association. These books are now in the public library. The new organization was apparently more successful than the former one, and quite a collection of books was made. The library of this association was kept in the store of Mr. Phineas A. Crocker, in a small building which stood where the Stiles building now stands.

In 1853 the Fitchburg Athenæum was organized "to furnish facilities for intellectual, moral, and social improvement, by the establishment and maintenance of a library, reading room, and lectures." The Fitchburg Athenæum was not a public institution. It loaned books to its members.

The subject of establishing a public library was discussed from time to time but no decisive action was taken till 1859. The warrant for the town meeting of that year contained the following article: — "To see if the Town will appropriate the amount allowed by law for the establishment of a Free Town Library or act anything thereon." The sentiment of the citizens seeming to be in favor of a free library the shareholders of the Athenæum held a special meeting previous to the town meeting to consider the expediency of presenting their library to the town, but after some discussion it was decided, by a vote of twenty-five to fourteen, not to make such a disposition of the books belonging to the association.

The town meeting that year was held April 11th, and the citizens at that time voted—"To appropriate the sum of \$1,831 for the establishment of a Free Town Library." A board of trustees was chosen at this meeting, consisting of Goldsmith F. Bailey, J. W. Mansur, James R. Wellman, Jabez Fisher, Thomas R. Boutelle, Thornton K. Ware, Hanson L. Read, Moses G. Lyon, and John J. Piper.

The annual meeting of the shareholders of the Fitchburg Athenæum occurred May 10, 1859, and at that meeting it was voted: — "To instruct the president and

treasurer to sell all the property of the institution, aside from the money in the treasury (about \$75), to the town of Fitchburg for \$400." The town subsequently authorized the purchase of this property and thus came into possession of about 1,600 volumes.

There was also, at that time, another collection of books in the town, about 200 volumes, belonging to the Agricultural Library. These books were purchased by the trustees.

It was decided to use for the library, the room that had been occupied by the Athenæum. This room, corresponding very nearly to the room now used for the mayor's office, was enlarged by the addition of the room adjoining in the rear. The library was opened for the delivery of books December 1. Public notice was given previous to the opening as follows :—

FITCHBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY.

All persons wishing to avail themselves of the privileges of the Fitchburg Public Library are requested to open their accounts at once as it will be impossible to do so in library hours after the rooms are opened for the delivery of books.

The library will be open for the purpose of opening accounts with such as may desire it, until further notice, during the regular library hours, viz :—

From 2 to 5 and 7 to 8 P. M., on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and from 2 to 5 and 7 to 9 on Saturdays, holidays excepted.

Notice will be given of the time of opening for the delivery of books.

D. STEARNS, *Librarian*.

Fitchburg, November 16, 1859.

Subsequently a second notice was issued, as follows :

FITCHBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY.

The Fitchburg Public Library will be open for the delivery of books on Thursday, December 1, 1859, at 2 o'clock P. M. Library Hours (same as stated in previous notice).

D. STEARNS, *Librarian*.

Fitchburg, Nov. 24, 1859.

December 23, after the library had been open three weeks it was stated in the *Sentinel* that accounts had been opened with over 1,200 persons, that 2,775 volumes had been taken, and 1,937 volumes returned. It was also stated that the library hours as announced were insufficient, and it was deemed advisable, while the urgent demand for books continued, to keep open every evening excepting Sundays and holidays.

The library remained in the rooms first occupied until December 1879, when it was removed to more commodious quarters in the extension of the city hall building, where it remained till July 1885, at which time it was transferred to the Wallace Library and Art Building.

The first annual report of the trustees was submitted at the town meeting held April 9, 1860. The following is a copy of the report :

At the last annual town meeting, April, 1859, the amount of money allowed by law to be appropriated for the establishment of a Public Library was raised, and a board of nine Trustees chosen "To make all necessary arrangements for the Library, and to purchase the books, and have charge of the same during the year." Said board of Trustees now offer to the town their first annual report.

At the time when the Trustees entered upon the discharge of their duties, there were in operation in this town two Libraries owned by certain shareholders; the Library belonging to the Fitchburg Athenæum and the Fitchburg Agricultural Library. The Athenæum Library consisted of about sixteen hundred volumes, most of them such as were desirable for the Public Library; the Agricultural Library consisted of a good selection of standard books, very desirable for that department. It was thought to be good policy to purchase both these collections of books, both on account of their intrinsic value, and for the purpose of concentrating the interests of all our people upon one Library, and that the property of the town.

The purchases were made on very favorable terms; and a number of shareholders in the Athenæum Library relinquished their shares of the proceeds of the sale, amounting in the aggregate to the sum of \$166.84, for the purpose of adding to the appropriation of the town. We

are happy to state that we have received for the Library donations of books and pamphlets, more or less valuable, and all desirable, and one donation of one hundred dollars (\$100) in money from our former townsman, Thomas Mack of Boston. A list of donors will be appended.

As soon as practicable the purchases of new books were made, and the whole collection placed upon our shelves for distribution as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made.

The different departments of reading are thought to be well provided for, there being a fair proportion of works in history, biography, travels, agriculture, mechanics, engineering, architecture, poetry, fiction and miscellaneous. And no book, we hope, that is objectionable.

It is believed that the expenditures of the board have been governed by strict economy, and that the principles which should guide in the administration of a Public Library have been adhered to.

The Library was opened for the delivery of books on the first day of December last. To prove that it meets, in a measure, a public want, we have but to state the fact that during the time the Library has been open, a little short of four months, the records of the Librarian show that there have been delivered and charged fourteen thousand four hundred and ninety-seven books, to 1,425 persons. An average of a fraction over ten books each for the whole number of takers.

It is exceedingly gratifying to the board of Trustees to be able to state that the regulations with regard to the delivery and return of books have been so cheerfully and

promptly complied with. Not a single volume charged on the Librarian's Book is missing from the shelves; and only three, not charged, known to be lost. Under such circumstances it would seem hardly needful to remind our people of the absolute necessity of strictly obeying the regulations for taking and returning books. Otherwise our Library would be scattered and utterly lost. The Trustees would express the confident hope that every one who takes books from our Library will continue to bear in mind that it cannot be sustained without a hearty co-operation on the part of each individual, in the observance and enforcement of the regulations, which have been made for its safe and profitable management. And they trust that the longer experience of their successors will prove that a Library can be so managed as to admit, safely, all the people to a participation in its benefits. The Library has now become an institution of the Town, creditable alike to its intelligence and its munificence. Its "maintenance and increase" in a reputable and profitable manner now require a small annual appropriation.

It is believed that from no other appropriation of an equal amount will the people derive more satisfactory and enduring advantages. The appropriation last year was for the "establishment" of a Library. The constant wear and tear of the books will render some outlay necessary to maintain it in its present value; to supply loss and depreciation; but the action of the Town, no doubt, was in accordance with the idea of the Legislature, viz: to "increase" as well as "maintain."

The Trustees need hardly suggest that it is highly desirable, if not absolutely necessary that the Town make, year by year, the small appropriation contemplated in the act of the Legislature. It has been supposed by some that by the provisions of the statute, no sum exceeding the "fifty cents" on each ratable poll can be raised by the Town for the purposes of a Public Library.

It is believed that this is not the true construction of the statute; but that the restricted action provided for, in the second section of the statute, has reference only to the maintenance and increase of the Library itself. Such a construction of the law allows the Town to pay for all required expenditures, excepting the renewal of the books and the increase of the Library, in addition to the amount authorized to be raised by the second section of the statute.

The Town is in some danger of suffering loss by fire, as there is no insurance on the Library, the Trustees not feeling at liberty to use the money at their disposal for the purchase of a Library, to pay for its insurance, and the Selectmen having been applied to, for that purpose, declined to do it.

Receipts and Expenditures have been as follows, viz :

Receipts,	\$2,152.87
Expenditures,	2,133.30
Balance,	\$19.57

Whole number of Books in the Library is 3,694.

Number of accounts opened 1,569.

Number of persons that have taken books 1,425.

A few books have been received, amounting to about fifty dollars, which have not been paid for, being beyond the means in our hands, and which may be returned if thought best to do so. A bill payable to Litch & Sawtell for a stove and pipe for the Library room remains due.

The board of Trustees cannot close this report without bearing their testimony to the faithfulness, patience and untiring assiduity of our librarian, Daniel Stearns, Esq.

FITCHBURG, April 9, 1860.

THOS. R. BOUTELLE,

G. F. BAILEY,

JABEZ FISHER,

JAMES R. WELLMAN,

J. W. MANSUR,

T. K. WARE,

JOHN J. PIPER,

MOSES G. LYON,

HANSON L. READ,

Trustees of the Public Library.

Reports were made each year by the trustees at the annual meeting, while Fitchburg remained a town, and since its incorporation as a city similar reports have been presented to the city council.

In addition to those whose names are mentioned as constituting the first board of trustees, the following persons have served in that capacity since the establishment of the library :—

Rev. KENDALL BROOKS,	GEORGE D. COLONY,
Rev. WILLIAM P. TILDEN,	EDWIN B. SAWTELLE,
FRANK H. SNOW,	HERBERT S. INGALLS,
STEPHEN SHEPLEY,	LOUIS D. BARTLETT,
LEWIS H. BRADFORD,	EZRA B. ROCKWOOD,
CHARLES H. B. SNOW,	JAMES PHILLIPS, JR.,
GEORGE E. TOWNE,	GEORGE H. SPENCER,
PORTER G. BARTON,	JOSEPH G. EDGERLY,
HENRY A. WILLIS,	Rev. PHILIP J. GARRIGAN,
E. FOSTER BAILEY,	FREDERIC H. THOMPSON,
Rev. JAMES T. HEWES,	Rev. HENRY M. TYLER,
GEORGE ROBBINS,	Rev. E. W. SMITH,
AMASA NORCROSS,	HERBERT I. WALLACE.

The librarians have been :

DANIEL STEARNS. appointed November, 1859.

B. P. TODD, appointed April, 1861.

J. M. GRAHAM, appointed April, 1862.

C. N. FESSENDEN, appointed April, 1865.

HENRY JACKSON, appointed September, 1866.

P. C. RICE, appointed January, 1873.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF PUBLIC LIBRARY.

ORGANIZATION FOR 1885.

LOUIS D. BARTLETT,	JAMES PHILLIPS, Jr.,
LEWIS H. BRADFORD,	GEORGE H. SPENCER,
GEORGE D. COLONY,	FREDERIC H. THOMPSON,
JOSEPH G. EDGERLY,	HERBERT I. WALLACE,
PHILIP J. GARRIGAN,	THORNTON K. WARE,
HENRY A. GOODRICH,	HENRY A. WILLIS.

President: THORNTON K. WARE.

Secretary: JOSEPH G. EDGERLY.

Treasurer: LEWIS H. BRADFORD.

Committee on Books: MESSRS. WARE, BARTLETT, COLONY, EDGERLY and PHILLIPS.

Committee on Library: MESSRS. GARRIGAN, GOODRICH, SPENCER and THOMPSON.

Committee on Finance: MESSRS. BRADFORD, PHILLIPS and WILLIS.

Committee on Art: MESSRS. WALLACE, WARE and WILLIS.

Librarian: PRESCOTT C. RICE.

Assistant Librarian: CAROLYN I. WORKS.

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